

Slaves and Fools

By
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II



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SLAVES AND FOOLS



ACT I.

THE USURPER.

ACT II.

SOLDIER OR BANDIT?

ACT III.

BANDIT!

ACT IV.

THE DIVINE PRINCE!

TRANSMITED IN TYPE

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Exhibit C page 17-12.

SLAVES AND FOOLS



DRAMATIS PERSONAE.

ARMANOS, KING OF PERSIA.

AHMED, PRINCE OF PERSIA.

GIONDAR, THE FIRST VIZIER.

MARSAVAH, THE SECOND VIZIER.

ABDUL.

PRINCESS FETNAH.

And

GIAOUR, THE KING'S SLAVE.

ACT I.—THE USURPER.

Scene I. A gorgeously furnished apartment in the King's palace. The King reclines on a divan. Giondar and Marsavah recline at the King's feet. Persian dance girls.

Music.

Armanos:

Slaves, begone! ye weary me!
 Giondar, thy black face appears witful,
 Thy voice resounds the tuneful note of bells,
 And melody is the key of soulful phases.
 Melancholy flits through my disturbed mind,
 Distorting the very aspect of nature;
 Whilst my very soul communes with devils!
 A devilish mood of nature seems as damnable as storms,
 The subtle lightning's flash sending forth,
 The voice of Heaven bidding man beware
 The folly of all knowledge; else the soul,
 Might grasp eternity, outwit the God of Gods!

Giondar:

What blasphemy is this?
 A King's soul communes with devils—
 A subtle mind outwits sweet God!
 Armanos,
 Thou art a dreaming devil!

Marsavah:

Ah, thou black devil of the evil swamps,
 A creeping flame from Afric's burning zone;
 Thou dar'st smite the King with accusing words,
 To vomit forth the sable blackness of thy soul.

Giondar:

My face is black, aye, as the starless night,
 My soul gleams lusterous as the whitest flower,
 The treasured emblem of the pure.
 Whilst thy face is white, thy soul is black,
 Tainted with the leprosy of a misspent life:
 Wearing the slavish chains of thy favorite master,
 Thou scoffing artificer of all darkling hell!

Marsavah:

Oh, subtle artificer, thou!
 The vampire beak hangs out thy soul,
 Draining the life's blood, and sending forth,
 The polluted venom of unholy deeds.
 Slave of contempt, I abjure thee!

Giondar:

Who calls me slave?
An presumptuous menial of an outcast court,
Succored by the usurper in the midst of beggary,
And wantonly brave in a beggar's speech!
A slavish outcast depicting vile deeds,
Depending on a disloyal King for royal pay,
To pay royal debts in counterfeit coin!

Marsavah:

My divine blade is of Damascus,
And longs to spill thy ebon's blood.
Erstwhile, defend thyself.

They cross blades. Enter Giaour in the habit of a Greek slave.

Giaour:

Masters, masters! what mischief brews,
A criminal intent in the presence of the King?
Behold! he gasps purple with rage,
To witness the shame of two presumptuous knaves,
Tempting death and dishonor.
Stay! my weapon is a gift of Armanos,
And shall teach thee a slave's stern lesson.

Marsavah:

Away, boy! thy perverse nature mocks death,
Bids defiance to my keen edged weapon.

Giaour:

A slave's weapon is a free blade,
The soul shall never be enslaved:
Mind is worthy of the strongest foe,
Shall steep the bondsman in vulture's blood.
Who shall insult the King—
Behold, thou erring fool!

Strikes Marsavah.

Marsavah:

Wounded by a slave—hell's slave,
Then accept thy fate and die!

Aims blow. Giondar thrusts weapon aside.
Armanos clutches the slave.

Armanos:

Help! the King is betrayed,
Pilfering Viziers betrays all trust!
Ho! Ahmed! slaves attend!

Enter Ahmed, and slaves.

Ahmed:

What fool attribute plays poor folly's rote,
To blot true manhood with a stain so vile?

Armanos:

A murderous scene demeans the King's presence,
Two scheming Viziers mock all trust.
Devoid of honor, the sacred purposes wrought,
To defend royalty, and save our house from harm:
These two villians thrust forth their deadly blades,
Their secret purpose was to kill the King.
Lead them forth, Prince, to some dark retreat,
Two grinning heads shall wofully play,
A gruesome game of agony.

Ahmed:

Lead the villians to a subterranean vault,
Find some torturing device to amuse the hour.
Thou black, infamous devil!
I long suspected thy paltry faith,
Thy noble air,
Base reminder of dethroned Kings.

Exit Ahmed and slaves with the prisoners. Enter Fetnah.

Armanos:

Gentle Fetnah! thy winsome presence brings
The moonlit beauty of a peaceful night.
And the Prince? he loves thee well?

Fetnah:

Amidst the murderous pair,
Bold as Armanos, of a kingly air,
The Prince bids defiance to all evil doers.
Thy face gleams wan—

Armanos:

Wan; mad passions of the soul,
Mocks and consumes me!
I am athirst for vengeance!

Kiss Giaour. Permit thy loving lips,
 To carress a slave's pale brow:
 'Twill dissolve the degenerate stain of slave,
 Awake the joy and pride of freemen.
 Thy slavish chains fall apart,
 Unequal birth rests not in thee.
 Behold! I proclaim thee Prince Giaour.

Giaour tears away the slave's dress, and appears magnificently dressed
 as a Prince of Persia.

Fetnah:

Sweet Prince, thy soft falling hair,
 Pure as strands of brightest gold,
 Drooping around a face divinely fair,
 Reveals a being equal to ourselves.
 Let sweet moods temper thy gentle mind,
 And flowers of love bloom thy heart's desire.

Armanos:

With uplifted scimitar the slave loud cries,
 "Who insults the King—behold thou erring fool—" "And like a hero struck the villian's arm.
 How like our Ahmed! Giaour is a mere boy,
 Time shall render him a valiant Prince,
 And honor mark him for her own.

Enter Ahmed.

Ahmed! how behaved the murderous Viziers?
 Has conviction settled their jaundiced blood,
 Giving an erring mind a subtle medicine,
 To study kingly methods.

Ahmed:

Giondar is silent, and in a devilish mood,
 Refuses to bestow a look or speak a word:
 Whilst Marsavah begs the King's pardon,
 With lingering looks beseeches me to say,
 A dread secret stabs his very soul,
 Unless he confesses to the King.

Armanos:

Murder or a pilfering deed,
 Polluting the conscienceless breasts of slaves,
 Proclaims them both a pair of erring knaves.

Ahmed:

The King gleans a surmisal, and
 Unveils the minds of dishonest men;
 Some men are honest as nature rendered them,

Implanting noble truths in noble minds,
 To insure God's truth in the hearts of men,
 And thereby smooth the rough paths of the world:
 Thus, man may perceive the nature of God,
 Gleaning wisdom in the light of Unerring knowledge:
 Flashing forth a true record of His identity,
 Bidding the false nature assume a garb of worth,
 For honesty is the flower of all our actions.
 Dishonest men merit naught but scorn,
 Who leaves naught to the world but merest dross.
 Time inherits a vast debt of ungodly crime,
 Disturbing nature with the abhorrence of evil deeds,
 Working upward taints the throne of God,
 Stifles pity to wreak a bitter vengeance.
 O'er our heads the errors of past centuries fall,
 And evil deeds react—too late to recall !

Armanos:

Noble Ahmed! a most princely scholar,
 Instilling Godly precepts worthy of a sage.
 Of a truth, Ahmed, the virtue of a deed,
 Falls to gather a most holy seed,
 To grow new prayers to heaven.

Fetnah:

Ahmed,
 As we are to wed within the hour,
 Ere great Armanos abdicates the throne,
 Leaving you to prolong the destiny of Persia:
 We seek peace devoid of war and turmoil,
 Vouch a denial of any unseen event,
 Or base, foul conspiracy,
 Treading the night like a masked assassin,
 To stab or kill, to pilfer and destroy!

Ahmed:

Sweet Princess,
 What fatal tale predominates,
 Thy gentle nature,
 O'erwhelmed with dark suspicion?

Armanos:

Taking dark presages of time,
 Prescient visions of the dreaded hour,
 When black Giondar usurps our royal throne.

Fetnah:

Thy wit is welcome, but of little import,
 When used to check the serious moment.

Ahmed:

Speak, fair Princess; as we live,
To obey thy slightest admonishment.

Fetnah:

Marsavah stooped in hellish fear,
White and ghastly as the hangman's victim,
Spoke words of brooding meditation:
“Hark! Giaour is a Prince,
And never was a slave.
Let the King beware!”

Armanos:

Fatal perception!
I rendered the slave a Prince,
Feeling that slavish inaptitude
Concerned him not.
Speak Ahmed,
The prophetic hour precludes all doubt.

Ahmed:

Let Marsavah appear before the King,
We may find him before the rack is set,
Ere vengeance his base appetite may whet.

Armanos:

Go, Ahmed, and send Marsavah here.
And thou, Fetnah,
Retire to thy apartments.

Exit Ahmed, *Fetnah:*

Dark clouds oft' hover o'er a summer's sky,
Betokening the rift of Heaven's clamorous tongue,
Sending forth dread thunder, and subtle lightning.
I oft' gazed on Giaour's sweet countenance,
To behold the mirror of my own delightful youth,
The lineaments of my brother. Oh, conspiracy,
The truth portends a direful necessity—
What! the King awaits in vain?

Enter Marsavah, chained, and slaves.

Leave us. (Exit slaves.)
Speak, my Vizier, and say
What evil portent lurks in thy soul?

Marsavah:

Evil is for the base, and
Black slaves like Giondar.
Oh, noble King! you cruelly blot

The vast integrity of undiminished years.
Were I ever faithless, or forgot
The honor due to majesty?
Were I the erring knave of depraved souls,
Conspiring to flaunt the errors of the time,
To base and damnable usage.
Alas! Marsavah lived to preach thy fame,
To dwell in peace amidst thy noblest friends.

Armanos:

Oh, vaunt not thy deeds,
Thine single error hath outdone all else.
What new evil prompts thy devilish mind,
To spite the heart of Armanos?

Marsavah:

Listen! and heed the dread conspiracy,
Leaping devil like to thy very throne;
Usurping the regal majesty of Kings,
And brewing mischief in the very air.
Giaour, the slave—he is—

Armanos:

My brother's son! aye, the proofs,
Else thy lying tongue,
Shall throttle thine own speech!

Marsavah:

Suspicion is the milestone of coming truth,
Thus truth came twixt thy evil destiny.
'Twas long since Giaour dwelt in Persia,
And of a verity, remembered him,
As a flower like, winsome child.
I probed his very soul, and his eyes
Bespoke thy brother's fatal orbs.
If thou—aye, as thou art a King,
Remember the fatal past.
The dread and everlasting war,
Of consummate and daring deviltry;—
When thou did'st dispossess thy brother,
Seize his throne,
Cast into damnable exile,
Both father and son.
Giaour! the very name.

Armanos:

Fool to dumbly forget,
The dread certainty of my brother's zeal;
The undaunted fire of his courageous heart,—
The proof, Marsavah, evil though it be.

Marsavah:

On his breast, white as falling snow,
Glistens a flower in fullest bloom:
As if nature sought to excel all nature,
Place a flower thereon beyond all price.

Armanos:

Memory revives the past,—
Seize him, good Marsavah, and
See wherein we are betrayed.

Marsavah grasps the slave and brings him to the King. He loosens the silk at his throat, and exposes the flower on his breast.

The flower of Persia! the priceless gift,
Valued beyond all price! see, Marsavah,
The wondrous bloom so fair and sweet,
Exhaling the delicious fragrance of his very soul;
Forbidding dark intents in the hour of peril—
The Flower commands the throne of Persia!
Oh, devil sprite of mischief! I remember
As Giondar left the room with shackled feet,
A tear clouded the tender beauty of his eye.
Hark, thee! his scimitar struck Marsavah—
Whilst black Giondar stood near.
Oh, black devil of the arid sands!
He is but masked, and as night,
Awaking dawn shall tear the mask away!
Ho! Ahmed! Ahmed!

Enter Ahmed.

Bring Giondar: a conspiracy points
Its serpent tongue to destroy us all!

Exit Ahmed.

Giaour:

Alas, we are doomed,
And the usurper plots to kill.
Oh, tears, rage, hate! 'tis a devil's hour,
And the devil holds all seeming power.
Kill me, Armanos,
And spare brave, noble Giondar.
Why use the throne of Persia,
For an usurper's footstool?
King of folly—and witless fool,
Thrones are the resting place of God,
Hell awaits the desecrator!

Armanos:

Fury! devils! Oh, thy serpent tongue,
Piercing minds and hearts with baneful poison.
Slave! oh, base, ignoble slave,
My heart frets at daggers drawn!
Kill him, good Marsavah.

Giaour:

Nay, Marsavah! thy knavish heart,
Trembles to see a boy unarmed—
Else the King were dead—dead!

Armanos:

Slave! feel my serpent fingers,
Strangle the serpent in thy blood.
Thus—thus to strangle Giondar!

Giaour gasps and strangles; the King flings him to the floor.

Giaour:

Base King! vile and infamous King,
Descending to the very realms of hell!
Give me thy dagger, Marsavah,
And watch me strike the vulture's heart.
Oh, paltry, pandering fool!
As a child I admired thy brave heart,
Whilst now thy craven nature merits reproof.
'Tis the poor toad, Armanos,
The weak despot has unmanned thee!

Armanos:

Watch the imp of mischief, Marsavah,
And listen to the venom of his unchecked spite,
Distort his inmost face with unholy rage:
Else mine old eyes deceive me, a serpent froth,
Gathers the rose on his lips to wither hate and all.
Give me thy dagger, Marsavah,
To stab him as his father enters.

Giaour:

No, no! a very devil's purpose,
To mock whilst angels weep!

Enter Ahmed, Giondar, and attendant slaves.

The King grasps Giaour and holds the weapon above his throat. As Giondar looks he starts in a frenzy, and utters a terrible, hoarse cry. He lifts shackled hands, weighted with iron balls, strikes the King, who falls convulsed to the floor.

Giondar:

Die! Away vile King to thy dishonored master,
Reeking in the filth and rot of undisturbed years:
He alone penetrates thy evil hour of death,
As gibbering death sits on thy hellish brow!
No token of mercy dews thy withered lips,
No eye of love pities thy dying hour;
Alone, the devil awaits upon the brink,
To grasp thee in the eternal arms of hell!

Ahmed and slaves grasp their weapons and rush fiercely forward.
Giaour clutches a scimitar.

Giaour:

The window is open, Giondar, and
Freedom or a gloomy death
Awaits us below.

Giaour flashes his weapon as Giondar leaps through below. He follows after.

Marsayah:

Devils! slaves! I am wounded,
And the great Armanos is dead.
Ahmed, hasten! thy father heeds thee not,
And vengeance crys aloud!
The lake is thronged,
Eyes look into startled eyes—
The people are mad, Ahmed, mad—mad!
They lift Giondar out the waters,
And threaten us with fire and sword!

Mob—below.
Long live the King—long live the King!

List! list! Giondar is King,
And the mob shrieks death to the usurper,
And his infamous breed.
Doomed! Giondar, the serpent,
Masked as the devil masks,
Coiled upon our very earth.
Oh, ignoble plot! we alone,
Accepted the black face as true.
Ahmed, Ahmed, listen!
A door leads adroitly
Through the King's private apartments.
Hasten, Ahmed, hasten!
The assasins—ascend—the—stairs!

Marsavah and Ahmed hasten towards the door. The mob with torches and scimitars, rush into the room. The slaves fight desperately, and all are killed. Marsavah and Ahmed back slowly, with the horrible roar and din ringing in their ears, and fencing the numerous weapons drawn to slay them, enters the secret passage, and the door closes like a flash. The mob howls, and the curtain descends like a flash, preserving the full force and dramatic intensity of the scene.

ACT II.—SOLDIER OR BANDIT?

Scene I. A street in Persia. A mob, howling mad, with torches and scimitars.

Leader:

We have searched the palace ravenously.
Our very feet burning the floor beneath;
Our curses rent the gloomy air, and we alone,
Seek death to escape dishonor.

Second Speaker:

Infernal carousal fires the city.
Ere the culprits ornament the parapet,
Persia shall rise and fall,
In a blaze of glory!

Third Speaker:

Vain and useless words! the usurper,
Deserted hell in the trail of a fool's comet—

The mob grasps and beats him, uttering howls of rage and derision.
Exeunt.

Scene II. The Gold Room. The room is luxuriantly decorated with tropical plants of huge dimensions; graceful flower vines trail fancifully over the walls of gold. The ceiling is domed shaped and magnificently painted. Birds flutter throughout the scene. Musical instruments, rare and almost forgotten; rich tapestry and costly ornaments decorate the scene. The rear of room opens through an immense oval entrance, composed of marble, containing statuary, and splendidly fretted with artistically wrought ornamental work. The interior entrance is supported on each side by huge pillars of alabaster, showing lofty mountains in the back-ground, and a garden of trees and flowers. A crystal fountain

in center of the Gold Room, sending forth immense clouds of colored waters, beating against the crystal ornament in center of dome, and falling into crystal basin in variegated colors. No tinsel; everything to be costly, elaborate and artistic.

Marsavah, Ahmed, and Fetnah.

Ahmed:

The slaves of hell have ceased to howl,
The imps of turmoil desert the streets of Persia.
Marsavah! 'tis the silent, midnight hour,
Whilst public sentinels guard the streets:
Whither shall we fly? Or lure sweet peace
Amid the traitors of the kingdom?

Marsavah:

My subtle blade is of Damascus,
'Tis the sworn enemy of all our foes.
Fear not! the God of war sleeps not,
Where Kings fall in the midst of knaves,
To engulf all conquering hell in the midst of peace.
Slaves of Kings, and Kings of mobs,
All rise to curse and pray!
'Tis the fool attribute of human nature.

Ahmed:

I know not whether thou dost mock or pray,
What fool mocks fool in the folly of the night:
My very soul combats the evil destiny,
Hastening the solemn, gloomy hour of death.

Marsavah:

Ahmed! thy little hour of gloom,
Reflects a darker hour than the howling mob,
Ere dreamt of the little hour they howled:
Like unwonted ghouls flaring hideous torches,
Flashes in a moment the hell of mentality!
Do they surmise our fateful hours,
Deeming the noble Prince,
A witness of unholy revels?
No! a mob is an inglorious freak,
Scattering all honor like the winds good seeds,
But—flaunting the chaff in the eyes of honest men!
Mobs! they fill the blood with cursed hate,
Venomed years the sole merit of victory,
Its everlasting sting.
A truce to Kings; my subtle blade,
Defies mobs and Kings—
All dogs of war!

Fetnah:

Marsavah: thou art noble and valiant,
And in the midst of death, parried thrusts
Aimed against our very hearts.
Thou did'st absolve and protect;
We thank you, our noble saviour.

Marsavah:

Sweet Princess! how is it with thee?

Fetnah:

I fear not. My heart grows valiant,
Gains strength in the knowlege of defense.
Thou—thou—brave defender of the King!

Marsavah:

Thou art brave as beautiful,
Thine radiant eyes outshine the stars!

Fetnah:

Soldier and flatterer! e'en as thy sword,
Laughs in the light of keenest wit.

Marsavah:

Many a sword smiles in death,
To drink wild, guilty blood.

Fetnah:

'Tis a valiant deed! the dullest blade,
Weeps to find an innocent victim.
The sad, blue eyes wet with tears,
Feels its cold glitter inflict the soul;
No voice pleads half so sorrowfully,
As when dying eyes emplores for mercy.

Ahmed:

Princess! Fetnah! what sad motive prompts,
Words to measure the depths of mercy,
To leave our sad eyes wet with tears?
The simile fills my weary eyes,
And looking I behold not!

Fetnah:

Ah, merry Prince, and Prince of lovers.
Thy brave heart is truly fettered:
Laugh! smile! bend not the will,
To fetter sweet eyes so ill timed.

Ahmed:

Fetters are love's sunbeams! and the light,
Of things eternal banishes all fears.

Fetnah:

Sweet Prince! love's moodful hour is near,
Sorrow but reflects the beauty of thine eyes;
Leaving thy lustrous eyes like starless night,
Whilst love groups idly the beflowered path,
To mourn for the stars forsaken!

Ahmed:

I group not—I fear not—yet—

Fetnah:

Melancholy voice! no lark's sweet tribute,
Enflames earth and Heaven!

Ahmed:

Love's arms shall enfold thee! sweet eyes
Melancholy with tenderness and truth,
Dreams not of a shameful grief,
To sway the mind with utter desolation!

Fetnah:

Desolation! why dread strong fate,
Grasp death ere its wings approach.
Sweet Ahmed! our love is truly valiant,
And wins its freedom through prison bars:
Love escapes, and 'midst trees and flowers
Builds new castles on the ruins of fate.

Ahmed:

Ah, the mood! the weeping sword,
Fell 'neath the pleading of thy faltering eyes,
And falling—broke my heart in twain.

Fetnah:

Ah, my love! seeming grief and woe
Tricked us both! as new lovers met,
The light of the stars within our souls—
'Tis joy, rapture! embrace me, Ahmed,
A kiss of love is eternal felicity!

Marsayah scowls like a devil; lets fall sword with a loud clash; the
lovers part.

Marsavah:

'Tis the lover's hour!
'Tis the hour of folly!
'Tis the hour of dreams!
And the owl hoots in derision!

Ahmed:

Thou art angry! words idly fret,
The dangerous hour of peace. No words
Tell me why thou art so.

Marsavah:

The cry of war re-echoes valiant deeds,
Wild wolves and hounds haunts the night,
With woeful cries of baffled hate!
My Prince Ahmed sips sweetest honey,
Fearing to reach the bitter dregs of wine.
Ah, it is pitiful! where is my weapon?
And why? no foe glares in my eye!

Fetnah:

'Tis an evil hour. The owls hoot, 'tis true,
Love, like friendship, conceals not
Its treasured gifts of nature, therefore
I pluck this rose from a faithful heart,
And rest it on my lips! If we three
Meet death together, press it on thy lips,
And dying, Fetnah's sweetest breath,
Shall bid thee wake in Heaven.

Marsavah:

Devils—fury—(picks up sword.)

Fetnah:

What now? I heard thee mutter,
As if curses burnt thy lips,
Whilst a pallor glooms thy brow!
Good Marsavah! brave soldier of the King,
Did I err or wound thy noble nature?

Marsavah:

'Tis nothing. I hate the silly owl,
Its hoot fills me with an unholy desire.
Aye, aye; I long to kill.

Fetnah:

'Tis an ill humor, and an evil bird,
Else my mood belies the hour.
Ahmed, Prince, good night. Marsavah
My last words for thee. Good night—
My valiant soldier of the King.

Marsavah—(kisses rose) :

Good night, sweet Princess, good night,
May Cupid deck thy couch with fadeless flowers.

Fetnah :

How strange he looks!
Eyes melting with love, as if the dew,
Escaped the rose, and filled his eyes,
With infinite, tender pity! (Exit.)

Marsavah :

'Tis true, the Princess needs rest,
Else our escape were certain within the hour.

Ahmed :

'Tis not too late; the Princess
Thinks not of rest or danger.

Marsavah :

Call her not! 'tis not the hour,
To glean life 'neath death's shadow.
I pity thee, poor little Prince.

Ahmed :

Ah, my sword! 'tis my only friend,
To distinguish 'twixt a friend or foe.

Marsavah :

As you will—

Ahmed :

My wit is poor indeed, or
My mind falters to admit the truth.
Give me the rose, it becomes thee not—
I shall kill thee else.

Marsavah—(kisses rose) :

'Tis the hour of fate—

Ahmed :

Thine eyes mocks devils! and yet
'Twas she who worked the fatal web!
I shall kill thee, Marsavah!

Enter Abdul.

Abdul :

My Lords, my Lords! the hour grows late,
Whilst the moon reflects our every window.
A man lingers in the moonlit shadow,

Watches the house with curious, furtive eyes:
He may be the watch-dog of the King,
His bark outreach our utmost safety.

Marsavah:

Bites and barks fret me not,
I dare kill the King's mad dogs!
Hark thee, Abdul; a truce to eyes and ears,
If thou art indeed my friend.

Abdul:

Eyes and ears are the safety valves,
To mingle wisdom in the hour of peril.
My Lord! I forbid the foolish intent,
Plucking out the root of all discretion.

Marsavah:

Away! thou man of rags and tatters,
Discretion venomous my hottest blood!

Ahmed:

Art thou mad? The street is masked,
Whilst every nook contains a foe.
Remember the Princess.

Marsavah:

True! Oh, wise Prince! forget the hour,
Marsavah laughed thy weapon to scorn.
'Twas a fatal jest!

Ahmed:

Leave us (exit Abdul.)
Jests are immeasured lines,
To trip the unwary in a fool's conceit.
Marsavah, I fear thy bent of honor
Is crooked beyond my honest intent.
Honor's delay is a just tribute,
To the fair life of a lady.

Marsavah:

I'll trust the hour, Ahmed,
The abiding of time shall decide between us.
You know the truth: 'tis to kill Giondar,
And place thee on the throne of Persia.

Ahmed:

Thou art mad! I wouldst fain conceal,
The 'roused animosity of repellent natures;
Wreak not a vengeance on thy friends,
And—shun the devil of thy better self!

Exit Ahmed, in a rage. Marsavah strikes the wine bottle and shatters it to pieces.

Marsavah:

Devils! fury—

SCENE III.—Moonlight. A street in Persia. Armanos.

Armanos:

Where is Ahmed? to leave me desolate,
The prey of doubt, and wanting tact,
To overcome the terrors rising in my path.
Is Ahmed dead? Oh, mad dogs of war,
My blade grows hot with famished desire.
Eyes droop with pain, bleeding wounds,
Burns with the fever of impatient wrongs;
Whilst the mob howled, my ebbing blood
Flowed like lava to quench its thirst.
Devils! Devils! Persia awaits my sword,
Her streets shall flow with rebellant blood.
Oh, cursed, thou—Giondar! My dagger!
'Tis the only weapon to fit thy heart.

Enter Giaour, magnificently arrayed as the King of Persia.

Who comes? Methinks 'tis like the King:
Boy! thou hast stolen my sacred garb!

Giaour:

If garbs are sacred, then pray withdraw
Thy mistrustful dagger! If thou art afraid—
No, no! the mob howls at thy heels!

Armanos:

Why, 'tis Giaour! as devils meet,
And the popular fancy divides wide hell,
'Tis the hour of peril!

Giaour:

'Tis Armanos!
The usurper! That serpent touch!

Armanos:

Aye, the King, boy!
Old, feeble, and thwarted by thy tainted race,
And covered by the wounds of war,
My desire is supreme.

Giaour:

Thou art past the age of war,
And feeble steps totter only to the grave.

Armanos:

To the throne!
Daggers awaits thee and thy unholy breed.

Giaour grasps his scimitar ,and jumps around Armanos; he probes him playfully, and Armanos darts at him in a furious rage.

What! Armanos is a plaything,
And the throne of Persia a fool's toy—
Sweet, merry boy! Oh, Prince of jesters!
I like the merry part; 'tis a sweet dream
To play the erring dolt and fool!

Trys to kill Giaour, who obtains dagger.

Giaour:

Oh, King of folly, and fool of fools,
We slyly play at cat and mouse—
The cat is victor in diplomatic schools!
Farewell, sly King, or King of fools,
The black hangman swift awaits thee.

Armanos:

Giaour, thou hast stolen my dagger,
'Tis the only weapon left my withered age:
See! I tremble; and my long dank hair,
Clots with blood—thine father's iron vengeance!
My heart is broken! a mere child outwits me,
Plays the jester to my sad, falling tears:
In comprehending the inability of old age,
Mocks a royal King tottering on the grave.
List, oh, list! legions shall mark Persia,
Armanos shall mark thy father's grave.

Giaour:

I forget not the vanquished hour,
Thou sought to strangle love and pity—now
This dagger seeks the white liver of thy race,
To absolve the last blot of Persia's infamy.

Armanos:

No, no! what! kill the King,
Who fears not death—yet—
Alas, Giaour, the hour of fate is near,
All else brews hell; Persia's master,
Shall kill and slay.

Giaour:

Stained with abhorrent crime, my mind
Has long grasped the horror of thy unholy ways.
In this moment of too jesting sport,
What if the jester became the executor?

Armanos:

Sweet Giaour! a nemesis heeds thee not,
As thou art infinitely sweet and fair, and
Devils, not angels, bathe in human blood.
Hearken, boy! thou art beauty born,
Beauty born is like the sun and flowers,
Beauty flys the withered form of death.

Giaour:

The rose hath thorns to pinch the unwary,
The blue Heaven hath clouds to fool the unwise.

Armanos:

Oh, fury! if Ahmed were like thee,
He dare tear out the heart of Persia,
And toss it to the carrion vultures.

Giaour:

Ahmed! 'neath my golden belt,
Giondar concealed a thrilling message:
Such tidings of peace and happiness,
As controls the court of Persia.
The message is for Ahmed.

Armanos:

What news, boy? not the grim headsman,
Not the black hangman's premonition?

Giaour:

Freedom, and the certitude of peace,
A crown of bliss for the lovely Princess.
Ahmed is a man, and—frowns thee down,
And his frown is death to thee.

Armanos:

He! even devils spare Armanos,
The rabble shrinks to hear my name:
Oh, to drive Persia with a cruel bit,
To grasp her in the arms of fate—and of Armanos!
Hell shall thrust forth its devouring eyes,
To afflict and curse the enemies of the King.
Fool! to threaten Armanos!

Giaour:

The blood of Kings flows in my veins,
 The flower of Persia blooms again!
 Oh, King of folly! my heart faints not,
 Nor falters to strike the fatal blow:
 Ere thy cursed breath pass thy lips,
 Thy reeking corpse lay gasping at my feet!

Armanos:

Spare the King! thou art not a fool—
 Oh, how passing fair thou art!
 Pity is the crown of compassionate angels.
 When thou wert a slave in chains,
 I rendered thee a Prince of Persia.
 Aye, boy! who jests now?

Giaour:

As thou art a devil incarnate,
 My blade shouldst seek thy vulture's heart.
 Blood and death howls for vengeance,
 List, oh, oh, list! the wolves are coming.
 (Wild howls without.)

Armanos:

Vengeance! No, no! I mean—
 Giaour, spare me—spare the King:
 Thy sacred garb protects the usurper.
 Oh, fatality! 'tis the rabble,
 The wolves! the Persian mob!

Giaour:

The mob is near; no power
 Lifts its voice to save thee!
 List, list, Armanos! they deemed thee dead,
 And in the hour of thy quick departure,
 Learnt that thou wert alive and free.
 Armanos! they come hither to kill thee!—
 To tear thee limb from limb!

Armanos:

Save me! Oh, death! Giaour—
 Where is Ahmed? Ahmed! Marsavah!
 (Horrible cries nearer.)
 They shriek and rave, as if the winds,
 Plucked out the heart of poor Armanos.
 They come! the wolves! the mob!
 Devils come not near!
 Ahmed! Marsavah!

Door opens; Marsavah and Ahmed rush into the street—the former clutches Giaour.

Marsavah:

Who calls? 'tis the ghost of Armanos,
Haunting the dread night in tattered clothes.
Hasten, Ahmed, hasten! the wolves; the wolves!

Horrible shrieks without. Exit Giaour, Marsavah.

Ahmed:

'Tis my father! oh, poor Armanos,
What sad event brings thee here?

Armanos:

The mob! the wolves! devils—all
Scorn the royal Armanos.
Save me! the throne awaits us still!

Ahmed:

Poor babbler! oh, baneful fruit,
Of the guilt stained heart of Armanos!

A rush of feet sounds near; a horrible din of shrieking voices.
Voice without.
Death! death to Armanos!

Armanos:

Ahmed; the wolves! the wolves!
Save me!—

Ahmed drags his father within, and shuts the door. Wild cries and voices without; "death! death to Armanos!"

Scene III. The Gold Room.

Marsavah, Ahmed, Fetnah, Giaour.

Marsavah:

Hush! the mob howls and frets,
Suspects not the presence of the King.

Marsavah holds Giaour, and presses his hand against the boy's mouth; in a moment his head falls back; he gasps and moans.

Armanos:

I am the King! let the mob howl and fret,
The devil spawn his victims in hell.

Ahmed:

Hush! thou art a beggar—
And the jeering mob thy eternal foe!
Recall not thy vanished dreams of avarice,
Thy throne is forever silent.

Fetnah:

Oh, Armanos! free and hence
To grasp sweet life amidst thy friends.
Oh, Heaven, Marsavah! thou art mad,—
Thou art dreaming and Giaour dies;
The wolves are gone!

Giaour gasps; falls in her arms as if dead.

Armanos:

Fetnah! the mob is gone!
Kill him! kill him!

Fetnah:

Thou art infamous, Armanos,
Thou shalt not slay the innocent.

Marsavah:

Oh, let him die! the little devil,
Needs a hand of iron to quell his spirit.

Fetnah:

Alas, Marsavah: you jest—you jest,
Thou art dreaming and Giaour dies.

Armanos—(furious, and with dagger.):

He dragged me to the altar of the mob,
Bade them pluck out the heart of Armanos.
Kill him, Marsavah, kill him!
(Ahmed drags him without.)

Fetnah:

Sweet flower; he droops in death,
Angels of mercy, pity the innocent Prince.

Marsavah:

Oh, pity not; 'twas the innocent Prince,
Who set Persia ablaze, and dethroned poor Ahmed.
Were Ahmed half as brave, poor Armanos
Would still retain yon glorious throne.

Fetnah:

Art thou insolent? I scorn.
The vile subtlety of devils and men.
The benevolent vent of each pitying heart,
Is to shield the young and innocent.

(Giaour revives.)

Alas, sweet boy, thy tender eyes
Are clouded with sad mists of pain;
Thine eyes wild woe is woe indeed.

Giaour:

'Tis a pleasure to meet the Princess,
And still find her kind and gentle.

Fetnah:

Oh, this world of devils,
The passions of unruly men and mobs!
Let us seek peace elsewhere.

Marsavah:

Sweet Princess,
This pleasant hour rules my assured destiny,
Retire to thy apartments; Giaour remains.

Fetnah:

What voice commands the Princess?
'Tis not a soldier, else thy noblest mein,
Grow welcome in her hour of need.

Marsavah:

Go! Giaour retains the secrets of the throne,
Princes dare divulge secrets without dishonor,
All noble perception remain unblemished.
Prince or devil, my desire is royal.

Fetnah:

Thou art insolent!
A shameless grace lacking the truth of honor,
Prompts thee to ignominiously humiliate
The Crown Prince of Persia.

Marsavah:

Princes and men! Princes demean the scene,
Where men are men, and royalty denies
Crown and State! 'twere truth indeed—
Faith is my honest principle.

Fetnah:

You insult the absent Prince,
'Tis a wicked infringement of the law.
A soldier, Marsavah! what's a man?

Neither soldier or man art thou. A beggar
Unmeditating evil to the Crown,
Would blush to cross thy sword.

Marsavah:

The truth is a lie! a blushing flower,
Painting the mask of vermillion on thy cheek,
All—all, revealing a false daub of infamy!
As Heaven listens and the dawn appears,
The thunder of my voice shall crush thee!
I risked life and honor to save the Crown,
Deeming all else paltry and insignificant,
Sought to outwit the blood hungered mobs:
I begged Ahmed to pursue the royal path,
Spurning all honor, unworthy of all honor,
Cried: "My wrathful sword belongs to Giondar,
My degenerate father is dead!"

Fetnah:

A shameful acknowledgment!
Oh, we are beggars, Mårsavah,
And amidst our woes you triumph still.
Uncrowned, crowned by fetters, hunted as slaves,
The royal purple drags in the dust.

Marsavah:

Go, go! the mountain beckons to the sun,
The trees already gathers the light of day.
Go! ere the voice of doom reaches thee.

Fetnah:

Ah, thou are insolent!
To refuse is the privilege of royalty—
Crownless or not, we are royal still.

Marsavah:

Death is welcome! we are dishonored,
Your fatal perception is our lasting doom.

Fetnah:

Marsavah! a man and not a soldier speaks,
The pale of fear daunts thy drooping eyes.
(Marsavah clutches her roughly.)
Delay not! else I appeal to Ahmed.

He leaps forward and opens wide the door.

Marsavah:

Princess, go! recall the innocent Prince,
As our weapons clash the howling mob,
Shall rend the air with foulest profanity;
Add to the splendor of all conquering mobs,
Cast our bleeding hearts to the yelping dogs!
(*Fetnah* closes door.)

Fetnah:

Ahmed shall not die! my faith, my love,
Crowns him beyond the hate of courts and mobs.
Pity the defenceless Prince, Giaour,
And harm him not.

Marsavah:

Naught of hate conforms my friendly needs,
Thou art idly perverse. No danger lurks
In any contemplated movement of mine.
Honest as a Prince, true as a soldier,
It is the mooted question of adaptability,
And he is free to go at once.

Fetnah:

Sweet Giaour! 'tis sad to depart thus,
Be true to self and honor,
And honor is victory's only crown,
All else is beggared dross. (*Exit.*)

Marsavah:

Ah, little devil! we meet again,
And death hath spared thee.

Giaour:

My peace of mind thwarts thee,
I perceive the devil hath thee still.

Marsavah:

Thy tongue is as cunning as ever,
And thy eyes subtle as the serpents:
Thou art like a soldier born,
But hark thee: Whenever thy subtle blade,
Finds the heart of brave Marsavah,
Drink his blood to the last drop.

Giaour:

'Twill be a welcome feast!

Marsavah:

Listen to me, I pray thee—
Where is thy father, Giondar?

Giaour:

The King of Persia?

Marsavah:

Aye, the King of Persia.

Giaour:

'Tis a short question, good Marsavah,
And a short answer fits it.
The King flits through the mobs of Persia,
Seeking his beloved friend, Marsavah.

Marsavah:

Art honest, boy?
Dare trifle with a blade so keen,
The subtle blade of Damascus?

Giaour:

Honest as the day, 'tis now night,
And the day is almost here.
Art thou satisfied, good Marsavah?

Marsavah:

Of thy sharp wit? Yes! Oh, woe,
If thy wit prove sharp as my blade.
Why art thou garbed as the King?

Giaour:

The Flower of Persia commands the throne,
And I share the royal honors.

Marsavah:

Ah, thou art wise indeed!
Thou presumeth to rule the jeering mob,
The painted mask of pools and slums,
Dragging foul steps in the march of civilization;
To cause normal minds to bend in morbid fear,
Whilst dull witted fools crowns the folly of the times,
With thorns and daggers for generations yet unborn.
(Such times but lack the force of mental power,
To sway the multitude of shamming hypocrites.)
Dare you sway the mob of mobs,
The rags and tatters of royal failure?

Giaour:

Mobs and men! 'tis a jest,
The toy and plaything of the passing hour.

Marsavah:

Thy wisdom hits the folly of the times,
Thy wit shakes the Cap and Bells!
Whilst the mocking jingle fools the world,
Learned minds pause to weigh the jests of fate.

Oh, thy wisdom surpasses all thy years,
And a valiant soldier bows before it.
And yet—how is the King to receive,
The coveted honor of the throne?
Shall Ahmed and Fetnah seek the palace,
Throned in grace and honor,
Outlive their little hour of ignominy?

Giaour:

Persia shall proclaim the hour of triumph,
Whilst a grand feast illuminates the city:
Ahmed and his bride shall welcome hosts,
Honored guests to command the throne.

Marsavah:

One question more. The time is the hour,
And the hour speeds to welcome freedom.
Tell Giondar that Ahmed is free,
Whilst Fetnah weds the soldier, Marsavah.
'Tis well! lovers are inherent slaves,
To wildly balk each decree of mine:
I hate the petty envy of royal courts,
And despise the maudlin voice of thrones.
Thou art free, and may depart at once.

(Giaour grasps scimitar and dagger.)

What! in arms—in arms?

Giaour:

The night is malevolent,
Fading stars betokens a stormy day:
Only fools and errant knaves,
Venture forth amidst thieves unprotected.

Marsavah:

Ah, true! begone—begone! delay not!

Giaour:

'Tis a merry night! the owls hoot,
The mob howls out direful woes to come!
(Stands in open door.)

Marsavah:

Ah, little Devil!
Thy wit sharpens my subtle blade,
And blades and necks go well together.

Giaour:

Sweet Marsavah!
Kiss me a tender farewell!
Oh, valiant soldier, thy petty spites,

Shall smother ere they pluck bitter truths.
Sweet Marsavah, brave soldier of the King—

He kisses the scimitar and blows the kiss along the sharp blade towards Marsavah in the most exquisite derision.

A royal kiss for thee!

Marsavah:

Ah, little devil! wait, wait, wait!

(Exit hurriedly.)

Giaour closes the door. Takes off heavy jeweled garments, leaving a single white garment reaching to the knees, and fastened at the waist with a belt. He hastily takes the statue of a boy similarly clad from off the fountain and hides it. He assumes the statue's place, with the cloud of colored waters falling o'er and around him. This scene is meant to be classically beautiful; to appeal to a normal sense of that which is perfectly artistic.

Enter Marsavah, Ahmed, Fetnah, and Armanos.

Marsavah:

Giaour is gone, and we
Stand in the midst of danger and of death.
Armanos, bind up thy wounds,
Thy scimitar arrives too late—
Giaour is gone!

Armanos:

Marsavah! listen to my wondrous tale,
And pray uphold the valor of my deeds.
Twice have I offered my Crown and jewels,
My life, my throne! Ahmed scorns them all!

Giaour—(aside.):

Noble Ahmed!
Giondar shall repay thy goodly loss.

Armanos:

Why mock mine gray hairs,
They shame the valor,
Of a shamming Prince.

Ahmed:

Thou! slave and usurper,
Who cursed all truth and blighted Persia!
Denial is the conviction of all fraud,
And condemnation strikes the evil forces,
Brooding in thy heart like a famished vulture.

I am free of Kings and debased minds,
 Striking at God's eternal law and order.
 As time merits a better judgment,
 Giondar absolves the impiety of Kings!

Armanos:

Marsavah! kill him! the vain trickster,
 Shamming piety to escape the mob!
 Spurned! the throne of Persia lost;
 Whilst Ahmed despises royal honors,
 He stoops to beggared triumph,
 And shames the devil's constancy!
 Oh, pale death! thy winged forces,
 Engulfs poor Armanos in its welcome folds!

(Dies.)

Giaour:

Armanos is dead, and
 The throne of Persia rises to better things.

Enter Abdul.

Marsavah:

Abdul, Abdul!
 The horses! the horses! otherwise
 Death and the rack confronts us all!
 Ahmed, delay not; 'tis the fatal hour! (Exit Abdul.)
 Giaour defied me, and tore my claws,
 To drag the mob from flitful fires,
 To break or sunder our unhappy lives.
 To the mounts, yon cragged peaks,
 Reinforces our future beyond all danger!

Fetnah:

Ahmed, come! beyond
 The city flares in crimson flames,
 Whilst a howling mob defends the street,
 Acting as if our presence here is known.

Enter Abdul.

Abdul:

The horses await your coming,
 And the garden is free of intruders.

Ahmed:

Escape is seeming dear, yet
 The worst of evil is evil deferred.

Marsavah:

Why brood o'er the evil hour,
Whilst death stares thee in the face.
Mad blows thunder on the outer walls!

Exuent to garden; door falls and mob enters.

Leader:

See! the usurpers! death and fire,
Awaits the master of destruction!
Behold! Armanos is dead; Glory
Awaits us in this victorious hour.

They gather around Armanos with fierce crys of rage. They rush towards the door.

Giaour:

Stay! the usurper is dead,
The others are the prey of Giondar.

Leader:

Kill the fool! a little moment,
And the usurpers have fled!

Giaour—(uplifts scimitar.):

I am the King! Giaour!
Behold the Flower of Persia!

They gaze in wonder, and dropping their scimitars with a loud clash, fall to the ground to worship and adore. Scene in the garden: Marsavah points towards the mountains with his sword; Ahmed clutches his free scimitar and waves it towards the mob. Fetnah clings to him despairingly.

Giaour:

Away! Armanos is dead,
And Persia is free of slaves and mobs!—
The God of day liberates us all!

Sunrise in the mountains. The scene is flooded with glorious light and color.

ACT III.—BANDIT.

Scene. Retreat of Persian bandits. A romantic vale with picturesque mounts rising to the utmost peaks. A cascade of falling water, rushing through the mountains and dashing precipitantly to the stage. Trees and flowers abound profusely. Mystical moonlight. A CAMP FIRE.

Ahmed, Fetnah.

Fetnah:

Why art thou sad, my beloved?
Thy face is sad and wan, tears
Course from thy burning eyes,
As if thy very soul.
Consumed itself in sorrow and remorse.

Ahmed:

The King is dead. I deem it not
The moment to despair whilst thou art near:
Yet pity droops to see him gone,
Dead—dead, and forsaken.

Fetnah:

Forsaken! alas, we mourn for him,
Drink bitter tears in sorrow and remorse;
Whilst stifled nature sobs aloud.
How forsaken, dear Ahmed?

Ahmed:

What are tears, pity and remorse
Whilst devoid of devine omniscience?
Armanos was a cruel and monstrous King,
And smote Persia with barbaric warfare,
Unequaled in the historic page of time.
I oft' sought to quell the dread turmoil,
Burning in his soul like a consuming fire:
Outreaching all depths of human hearts and minds,
Stretching lithe like to all predominant hell!

Fetnah:

Ahmed! sweet Prince; what grief is thine?—
So o'erwhelming as to besmirch the dead,
Crush pity's pinions in the saddest hour,
Mortals meet with in the destiny of human woe.
Thou art mad, Ahmed, else my trembling heart,
Finds no tender mercy to forgive or to forget.

Ahmed:

Oh, for a moment of sublime grief,
To shame an ocean of tears!

Fetnah:

Thou art mad! thy pallid face
Is stained with wildest gloom and tears.

Ahmed:

Tears of rage! 'tis shame and woe,
The knowledge of a father's perfidy,

The vile consummation of all leprous deeds.
My soul is sick, and this poor life,
Seems empty of all glory.

Fetnah:

Thy voice poisons like an adder bite,
The subtle fallacy of mere words,
Stabs like no sword dare;
To leave an eternal, festering wound.
Armanos! how oft' his gifted tongue,
Spoke words of gentle love and tenderest pity:
The compassion of a merciful King,
Full of wisdom and of piety!

Ahmed:

The cunning leer of a dread villain's smile,
Falters not to call a thorn a rose—
False simile oft' smooths the evil of his way.
Giondar was a noble King,
Yet my father usurped his regal throne,

Fetnah:

Oh, the very flower of kings—
And Giaour, the King's slave!—
May heaven preserve them both!

Ahmed:

The indelible stain of murdrous intent,
Lurked like a devil in my father's soul;
To deal death and destruction to our poetic race,
Exile for years a just and noble King.
He was a glorious King, and sweet Heaven
Rendered His divine nature like a subtle flame,
Whereof God moulds the shapes of angels.
Uncontaminated by the vices of his time
The man of honor lives; 'tis the man
Who rises supreme in destiny's fateful hour,
Shakes the shackles from his prisoned arms,
Winging the world of dissolution, stifles fate
Until heroic nature breaks world-wide bonds,
Strikes to the very root of the world's infamy,
Renders at last a just tribute to his Maker.
A man! he 'wakes the far echoes of time
To wing the earth with Mercury's feet,
Bidding defiance to worn creeds and sordid minds,
Smites weak error in the face of nations!
A man who usurps not the nobility of nature,
Trammels laws in the midst of breaking hearts,
To thwart a nation's destiny whilst "Justice is blind."
Which nation sleeps and finds the talons

Of a "bird of prey" pierce its faithful breast,
And mocks to see it gasp and die?
Oh, the devil who betrays the hour of peril,
Wreaking vengeance on all living things;
Deeming the crimson flag a badge of wisdom,
Whilst the traitor cringes beyond the "pale of law,"
Leaves a serpent trail in the hearts of men!
Giondar is one of God's masterpieces,
And in moulding this kingly mind of worth
Shows forth the folly of all evil lives.
Fetnah! dare conceive the honesty of mind,
Extolling Goindar at the price of a soul's agony?

Fetnah:

I believe thee; my heart grows sad
To remember the false deeds of one
I loved none less than Ahmed: I pity—pity!
We are adrift, and the cold, pitiless world
Looks on with unfeeling hearts and frowning eyes.
Love falters not, the compassion of an angel
Breathes in my soul like a living flower,—
For thee, beloved, for thee!

Ahmed:

Alas, love is sweet! see yon moonlit mounts,
And view the poetic beauty of a dreamful night.
In such a scene we part forever!

Fetnah:

No less cruel is thy tongue
Than the thorns and thistles of a meanless life.
Part? Oh, death! why bid me die?
Fate tricked us like a winged Nemesis,
Stole our thrones amidst the music of dull play,
And, playing us false, falsely mistook
The angel for the devil!
Is not fate cruel and revengeful,
To take away our throne?
Is life so sweet that I must die?

Ahmed:

Live, sweet Fetnah: I bid thee live,
And soar to a life worthy of thy beauty;
And thereby learn the tribute to Genius,
To grace the mind with all fulfilling duty,
The inherent power to convince and sway.
Thou shalt not mate a beggar Prince,
Or stoop to moths and patches:—
Kings shall kneel and worship thee.

Fetnah:

Alas, then! love is an unworthy belief,
 The empty toy of slaves and fools!
 Holding faith whilst rich and secure,
 To overreach frail hearts in poverty and trial.
 Love, Ahmed, is a thing of price,
 To despise or sell to the highest bidder—
 To outsell shame and heap souls in hell!
 Dar'st measure a woman's love,
 To sift it in the hour of peril,
 And toss the chaff to blind noble nature?
 Oh, accursed hour! thou loveth not,
 Else my heart would be to thee a mirror,
 Thine image reflected therein like a God!

Ahmed:

Sweet Princess! 'tis a very dream of love,
 Based on a lover's fancy: outwitting all pride,
 Grows like a resolve, the very nature,
 Looming like a white soul,
 Presents life's truth—
 Honest love is the God-like virtue.
 A true heart is the mirror of Heaven itself.

Fetnah:

Ah, sweet Ahmed! the tenderness of thy eyes
 Awakes my woman's heart; the gentle nature
 Of truth and honor, believes thy merest word.
 I am the Princess, and proud nature 'wakes
 Like a subtle flame within my very soul.
 What awaits me? Poverty? Poverty is sweet,
 Love is the ladder to climb all heights of life:
 To look down on mortals who wed empty dreams,
 A flimsy excuse to 'scape the burdens of life:
 To smother frail intent in the woes of another,
 Heap crime and infamy on generations yet unborn.
 Life is a study, Ahmed, and the seeds of time
 New grow our deeds, whether vile or sublime.

Ahmed:

Noble heart! our love awaits the morn,
 The silver chime of sweet wedding bells.
 Faith is the vigilant truth of nature,
 Faith and trust averts the woes of destiny.
 Hark! footsteps approach, and fierce Marsavah
 Doubtless brings news of the King, Giondar.

Enter bandits, who carelessly cast themselves around the fire; partake of wine and fruit. Enter Marsavah, superbly clad in the costume of a bandit chief. He presents the most picturesque figure of all time.

Ahmed:

We are betrayed, and in the maze
Of a bandit' lair.

Fetnah:

We but slept while near Marsavah,
And our wits were dulled to emptiness;
A villain smiles! in the presence of the court,
Wore the part of soldier, to tinsel and tatters.

Ahmed:

The tatters are gone, and now gleams
A form majestic. Ne'er in my courtly days
Did I perceive such wondrous grace of dress;
Gold and jewels gleam in dazzling array,
Richest fabrics dulls the glitter of the sun.
The burden of the soldier wearied him.
Oh! to be a bandit! Marsavah is perfection!

Fetnah:

What a graceful rogue! the eyes
Flash brilliant as the sword's edge;
The form and stride flaunts insolent,
As if Princes were but beggars.
Art thou to trust or deny?

Ahmed:

Faith, no! 'tis the inconsequential desire
Of the peacock, to lure and deceive the eye.
He is unmasked. Observe the drooping eye,
How like the glitter of a coiled serpent's!
Perhaps the villain meditates revenge, and
Presumes to outwit Princes with outlawry.
Hush! the devil approaches—
I perceive his motive,
To delude and ensnare.

Marsavah:

Ah, my devoted lovers! ne'er did the sun
Ere shine on such a royal pair.
A truce to the silly, white flag,
Let's spread the crimson 'neath our feet.

Exit Fetnah.

Ahmed:

(Marsavah!)

What means this rich and lavish attire,
Costly baubles decking a soldier's brow?
How disdain the white robe of state,
Or the soldier's dress of practicability.
As if presuming to jeer courts as out of date,
And play the knave to fool nature's astute eyes.

Marsavah:

The gold and jewels represent the valor
Of my noble knights! Each bauble means
A drop of royal blood or a royal life!

Ahmed:

Be honest! Marsavah, the time,
Is not the time to waste,
In jest and foibles.

Marsavah:

Ah, to be honest,—
Armanos killed the honor of a soldier,
And a soldier without honor is a vulture,
Parading the path of duty in the pits of hell.

Ahmed:

Thou wast a brave soldier, 'twere a pity
To find a soldier in a bandit's masque.
You jest at erring times, and the mask you chose
Is the putrid imperfection of the courts you despise.
Marsavah! thousands like you despise the semblance
Of false knaves built like themselves,
And rising to inglorious victory by the very theme,
They sought to drag into their filthy mesh
The nobility of wealth, and their honest convictions.
After tasting the sweet honey of success,
And testing the value of despised gold,
Flaunting inspired creeds to speculate in gold,
Drinks the very dregs of dishonored manhood.
Men like you deceive the hearts of men,
And, robbing them of force and worth,
Leaves the race of men to die like famished dogs!

Marsavah:

Faith, 'tis no jest! yon sleeping devils
Are drugged with wine and delusive gold.
Gold is the crucible of the world's Genius,
Its charity, spites, malice, and virulence:
Men partake of its treasured contents,

Some to live and make others live,
Some to die and make others die!
Wealth is a force, and the strength of wealth
Is to make a country, as a country makes men:
And men of character outlive mere gold,
And substitute a thousand virtues instead.
Marsavah refuses to become the court jester,
To mingle with the witless fools of folly,
Depending on an arrogant and despicable nobility.
Ah, Giondar! he loved me well,
And the court he ruled was a court of men,
Each man a brave and courtly knight.
He came like a black devil, masked
Beyond the recognition of his wisest friend.
And thou! I betrayed all else for thee—
Honor and Armanos demanded my strongest blade.
My time is come, and all deluding kings
Sink into insignificance; my gold and jewels
Are vaster than the treasures of Armanos.

Ahmed:

What a bitter truth! a soldier's fall
Is not the act of free manhood:
Something tangible, something vile and unseen,
Tripped the valor of a valiant soldier.
A bandit! a dog! a soulless principality.
Thou a bandit! thou art not a man!
A man adds to the world's knowledge,
A paltry thief steals therefrom.

Marsavah:

Prince Ahmed!

Why use mere words of trickery,
A base subterfuge to besmirch a friend?
Beware! this wee jeweled stiletto
Stabs more surely than unprincely words.
Before I became the Vizier of Armanos
My name was magical in all the realm,
No soldier was half so valiant as Marsavah.
What's a bandit? Worse than knave,
A king, a ribald court, or dishonored majesty?
Who taught me that gold was above honor,
Honor a thing of rags and tatters?
Armanos! enslaved by theives and devils,
Spurning virtue and honor as merest dross,
To cast to fools and unmeditating minds.
He 'rose to supreme power in a day,
Gulped Persia's blood like a bloodless vulture.

Who taught me the bandit's creed, who
Assuming the virtue of a sage and saint,
Plied the murdrous craft of bandits and knaves.
I was a soldier! the honor of a name
Smirched in a King's dishonor, is now kingly fame.

Ahmed:

A soldier is a soldier; a knave's a knave,
And no King or Prince true honor can enslave.

Marsavah:

Ah, you innovate on all vacuous lies,—
Yet, patience! My dagger's not blunted yet.

Ahmed:

Marsavah, I deem thee a masked trickster,
Garbling words as bandits murder for gold.
If base desire prompts thee
To conspire with bandits
Why drag me to the vicious pits of hell?
Why, Marsavah! in my uttermost life
Did'st ever know me to commit a dishonest act?
Thou art a villain! and, declining doubtful honor,
I now bid the soldier knave farewell.

Marsavah:

Ah, dear Prince! thou wert ever a whilom fool,
And despised evil too much to trammel kings:
While thou did'st pursue
The idle, flowery path,
Armanos chained the dove to a vulture.
Go! and, as the stars speak to thee,
Each star separates thee from the Princess.

Ahmed:

Threats are vain, and empty threats
Are things inglorious like thy blunted dagger.
My scimitar, Marsavah! my scimitar!

Marsavah:

Words are like gold, and you use them well,
Else thy path were cut off indeed.
Why linger? A bandit arms a friend,
But leaves an enemy helpless.

Ahmed:

Knave! thy evil soul is sordid and debased,
And thy dishonor shames all other infamy.
What devilish mood suggested to thy mind

The vile recourse to outwit mine honor!
 Rob me of all that's worthy of endeavor,
 To drag the Princess in the midst of thieves.

Marsavah:

'Tis a pleasant tale! in a short space
 Giondar's court shall ring the infamy
 Of Fetnah and her royal lover.

Ahmed clutches Marsavah savagely; enter Fetnah.

Fetnah:

'Tis a dreadful sight,
 And my eyes go wild to behold
 A Prince stoop to a bandit!
 Sweet Ahmed! thou art royal still,
 And words are empty of all meaning
 To shame or condemn a Prince of Persia.

Marsavah:

The jesting mob shall blush with shame
 To find a timid Prince the Prince of bandits;
 Prince of a band renowned as royal-haters,
 And shall name him Armanos the Second!
 Armanos! ah, well! he was a valiant knave,
 And his deeds were unfettered deeds of valor.
 Ah! who comes here?

Enter Giaour disguised in rags.

Giaour:

The hour is speeding towards the morn,
 As the resplendent moon pales o'er the hill;
 I dread the ghostly haunts of night,
 The unlit aspect of nature.
 I need food; my weary form
 Craves shelter near yon blazing fire.

Marsavah:

Ragged outcast of grim poverty and dispair,
 Wandering spirit like o'er the rocks and plains;
 To beg, as if thy wan face were not a prayer.
 Ho, slaves! bring food and wine!
 Leave not the shelter of the bandit vale, else
 Thy poor life hangs in the balance.
 Henceforth thou art Marsavah's slave.

Giaour:

Oh, generous master! the spirit of kindness
 Beams like a jewel in thy sparkling eye,
 Wakes pity in the hearts of yon sleeping devils.
 I'll act the slave; I'll be an angel
 Jest gloom to scorn, 'waken mirth
 In the bosom of my master.
 Behold, merry bandit!
 The flower of poetry lives in my heart!

LOVE IS THE FLOWER OF THE SPRING.
 GIAOUR.

Sweet love is the flower of the spring,
 To a poet the love birds soft sing:
 The gate of the soul responds to the key,
 Of all true hearts wherever a lover may be.

For love is the light of our eyes,
 The star of our smiles and our sighs:
 The fair morning of life,
 The joy of all strife,
 The knowledge of all life supplies.

Sweet love is the flower of all time,
 Gives a glow to life that's sublime;
 The dream and the fact soft falling,
 The faith and the hope ere responding.

Sweet love is the flower of the spring,
 To reflect o'er our life a silvery wing:
 To sing songs of the morn,
 To all loves yet unborn,
 To a poet sweet ravishment brings.

Marsavah:

More! more! you cheer our hearts,
 And bid dull gloom begone.
 Is he not a merry, jesting slave,
 A shackled angel to enter hell?

Giaour (Aside):

I am Giaour!
 The son of Giondar!
 Marsavah is King of the bandits,
 And lured you hither to kill you:
 He vows to wed the Princess,
 And render her an unwilling slave.

Beware, and start not,
 Lest this slave of slaves
 Discover all and kill you!
 Trust me, Ahmed, and sweet time
 Shall revive the glory of other days.
 (To Fetnah.)

Sweet maid, thy gentle eyes,
 Whispers love notes like the cooing dove.
 Sing, I pray thee!

Fetnah:

My heart, with hatred filled,
 Laughs thy love to scorn:
 And the daring mood of pride
 Wreaks a sublime vengeance.

Ahmed:

Let no vain or empty word
 Gleam the vast debt of hate:
 A sword shall leap to heaven
 And with God's weapon mate!

Ahmed, Fetnah, and Giaour:

All's not empty; all's not vain,
 Thrones await both fools and slaves:
 Mirth and fancy come again,
 Steel shall find the hearts of knaves.

The rose blooms sweetest in the morn,
 To wither in the sunlit day;
 Greatest lives are sundered and torn,
 Whilst childlike faith is still at play.

THE SOUL OF WONDER.

Giaour:

Oh, gentlest, tenderest, moodful hour,
 The soul of wonder and the God of power:
 Awake, awake! and feel the test of time,
 Empower your lives with all gifts sublime.
 Awake, awake! to the splendor of the hour,
 Whilst life assumes a God-like power,
 To wield a force o'er all human hearts;
 Unveil the soul; human error swift departs.

Marsavah:

Whilst the dawn is near, and
 Love rests like a flower on boyish lips:
 Hatred fills my very soul; temptation yields
 To the baneful necessity of the hour.

Ahmed! victim of my unrequited hate,
Surging in my heart for weary years:
For this reason my venom'd blade,
Penetrates thy weak and fainting heart.

Ahmed:

I am unarmed,
A very devil makes easy thy task.

Fetnah:

He dare not kill thee, Ahmed,
Else we die together.

Marsavah:

Divine Princess! 'tis for thee,
My heart glows and throbs!
Hercules wields the glorious power
To still Ahmed's venom'd heart.

Aims blow. Giaour suddenly thrusts weapon aside with a scimitar and wounds Marsavah.

Devils! Stupid bandits, still sleep on,
A set of drunken knaves to laugh to scorn:
Where is my weapon? Oh, ragged, filthy slave,
Slavish chains shall teach the error of thy ways.

Giaour shows the *Flower of Persia* and points the weapon at his heart.

Giaour:

Behold! the precious *Flower of Persia*,
Commands the royalty of men and—bandits!
Thy most valiant slave proudly defends
The precious *Flower of Persia*!
My weapon speaks to thee,
Thy sluggish blood dulls its keen edge.

Fetnah (holds *Ahmed*):

Stay! 'tis treason
To doubt the *Flower of Persia*!

Ahmed:

Sweet Princess,
How combat this cruel sting of fate?

Marsavah:

Giaour, beware!
Twice wounded by a vapid boy!
Chiding the valor of a man to empty scorn.

Oh, what hatred fills my soul,
Awaits a vengeance beyond all murder,
Foul and reeking as the assassin's soul!

Giaour:

Stir not! fate dwells in my eye,
My divine blade is of Damascus!
And all the valor of sweet Persia
Lurks therein to scent the death of knaves.

Blows a whistle; enter cloaked men who bind the bandits and Marsavah,
struggling.

Giaour:

Freedom awaits thee anon,
And bandits shall become our valiant soldiers.
Honesty triumphs, and honor awaits
To mingle light and knowledge
In the paths of men.
The dishonest mind reflects the darkness
Of devils, abhorred in mortal sight.
Sweet Marsavah! let poor Giaour,
The scorned slave of Armanos,
Smooth the mocking frown,
Lurking like a worn devil on thy weary brow!

Marsavah:

Oh, devils, how he taunts me,
Wreaks a vengeance worse than death.

Giaour:

Sweet Marsavah!
Oh, gentle, trusting Vizier;
The cringing menial of the foulest court,
E'er bred in the realms of fairest Persia.
Speak Vizierly phrases, sweet Marsavah,
With thy wonted candor blend honeyed poison,
As thy lying tongue oft betrayed Armanos.

Marsavah:

Lead me forth! the boy is gifted,
With the strength and majesty of kings.
My mind grows dense.

Giaour:

The Princess longs to hear thy voice,
To behold the fiery passion of thy eyes;—
Oh, gentle Marsavah! she frowns not,

Her sweet eyes vainly seek thine own.
Oh, slave! cringe and frown in vain—
What a shackled devil to enter hell!

Marsavah:

Ahmed! mock and scorn; revenge
Smothers thy dishonest pride.
Ahmed embraces the Princess.
Pause! oh, if Giondar were here!
Shame and madness would unbend me!
Trees shaken 'neath the storms of Heaven
Fall crushed to earth.

Enter Giondar, heavily cloaked.

Giondar:

The King of Persia greets thee,
The wrath of Heaven and of all Kings,
Patiently awaits thee.

Marsavah utters a loud cry and falls to the ground. Giaour places his foot on the bandit's chest and touches throat with weapon.

Giaour:

Were not thy sneering face an empty boast,
Thy false tongue a devilish note of hell:—
Thy soul a feeble flame of infamy—
Were not the King of Persia looking on,
My divine blade shouldst play thy knavish heart,
And end forever the dull game!

ACT IV.—THE DIVINE PRINCE!

Scene—The Throneroom, brilliantly lighted and magnificently decorated; lofty dome, superbly painted and supported by splendid pillars of alabaster. Persian art abounds throughout. Giondar seated on the throne; Giaour stands beside him. Both are richly clad in silks and jewels.

Enter Fetnah, Ahmed.

Giondar:

Welcome, Fetnah!

Welcome, Prince, to our peaceful throne.
We are aware of thy noble nature,
The keen sense of nature predominating all else:
The admirable traits of nature wrought,
To win the admiration of thy friends.
Whilst we love thee tenderly,

The deeds of Armanos
Glooms the hour.
He is dead; naught of an ill nature
Shall bespeak my brother's misfortune, or
Darken thy sweet youth and pride.
Henceforth thou art favored of the court,
And remain a proud Prince still.

Ahmed:

Noble King! words seem vain and empty,
Speech fails to portray the o'erwhelming thought,
So ruthlessly torn in the midst of gratitude.
Your majesty may deem words an empty boast,
Remembering that deeds lead to majesty and power—
So oft played in the life of Giondar.

Giondar:

Words reflect the heart's tenderness,
The exalted power of the mind;
Thought is supreme, wrought in strong endeavor.
The dishonest mind is masked in folly's veil,
Dissembling nature's gifts in loudest error,
As a dull-witted fool partakes
Of ambrosial food,
Only to mock the gods.

Ahmed:

Thy eloquence masters doubts, almost persuades
The mind to dwell in supreme faith and love.
I wonder to perceive the folly of men,
Assuming a tinsel mask,
To conceal the immortal soul.
The wit of kings seems blind and foolish,
Struggling 'gainst the sword of time.

Giondar:

Knowledge is the sword of an honest general,
Doubt is failure, whilst war is hell!—
When prompted by an occasion of dishonor.
Ignoble minds may strive to sustain ambition,
The lust of war—to win a petty village,
And assume a valiant air to please the multitude.
Arbitration is the friend of kindred souls,
And the jewel of all argument!
Unnecessary war is murder,
And the mind o'erleaps the necessity of the soul:
Arbitration masters questions difficult to solve,
Spares the white soul of the innocent.
God permits no infringement of His laws—

Obey! peace descends in the midst of nations,
 To write understanding in the hearts of men!
 Honor predominates, all else is distress,
 Harbinger of woe for proud and tactful nations.
 The noble men of nature aspire to conquer,
 Honestly protects a flag given by an honest God:
 And untainted remains the nation's glory,
 The divine inspiration of all national force.
 Drag or permit it to be smirched
 In the slimy pool of some revengeful foe,
 The flag proclaims the fool and knave,
 A nation unworthy of heroic power or belief,
 To dishonor a nation's coming achievements.
 Necessary war is vital, if unpremeditated,
 The God-like attribute of justice remembered:—
 Whilst an unholy war is the price of nations,
 Murdered souls return to afflict the enemy.
 Devil tempted fools should spare the heroic dead,
 A noble enemy is not a coward on the field:
 Great nations shall not crush a helpless foe,
 He who aids the afflicted is a friend of God!
 War is not of earth, but reflects to Heaven,
 Nations might surmise the greatest truth in life,
 Lest we forget that man is man, and God is God!

Ahmed:

Glorious King! the power of majesty
 Looms greatest in the hearts of just and noble minds:
 I abjure the tenets of a mind tainted to befoul
 The worthy belief leading to our God;—
 Whilst devilish hypocrisy conceals the sweetest truth
 And damns the very force of all nature itself.

Giondar:

You arouse dark thoughts to unmask the devil,
 And throw cold water on religious errors—
 Religious harlots damns the world!
 Behold my sweet Giaour:
 He beholds God as a star, a flower,
 Nature is an apt illustration of His being—
 He loves and doubts not.
 Beautiful as love,
 Untainted in cunning and selfishness,
 Twin evils taught in childhood.
 He dare face an intrepid villain,
 Smite him in the hour of peril,
 Write knave or villain in the rascal's blood.
 Sweet Giaour! let the hour be one of peace,

Permit the hopeless to regain life's prizes.
Sing! speak thy heart's unerring truths.

Giaour:

Doubt is the serpent of true love,
And hate the fangs to kill thee!

Ahmed:

Doubt is a lie, therefore sweet truth
Awakes the mind to stronger resistance.

A DEVIL DREAMING!

Giaour:

We steep dull error in the mind of time
And awake the slumber of a devil dreaming;
We renounce the spiritual force sublime
And revive the waking devils teeming:
Revive the devils dreaming
And the pale doubt of seeming!

We sleep like dullards in moth-eaten dross,
And awake the microbes of evil adversity;
We group like slavish fools to learn the loss,
And perceive 'tis only folly and perversity:
Only—to revive the devils dreaming,
And the pale doubt of seeming!

Shall the old sword return to earth
To curse or embroil an evil birth?
Ah! we watch the tide of dismal fate
As we approach the wonder of destiny's gate:
To revive the devils dreaming,
And—the pale doubt of seeming!

Giondar:

Words of ironical fate
With the essence of true wisdom mates:
And the eternal gift of ages
Is to love the fool, and forget its sages!
Life is like a tender flower,
Within its leaves lurk the power
To wither in the morning sun,
Or see its bloom forever run!
I dare revive a withered flower;
Mystery is the secret of men's power,
To master immortality in life,
End of folly and of superstitious strife.

PRINCE AND POET.

Sweet Prince! winter is gone and spring only brings
 A sad little bird that mournfully sings;
 A faded flower in the bleak, wintry sun,
 Where life's fallen leaves are blown to and fro;
 A broken heart sobs in this desolate hour
 And droops in your heart like a forgotten flower.

Sweet, carressing nature! Oh! thy tender eyes
 Fill fond remembrance with love's dreaming sighs;
 The melody murmurs of the long distant years,
 Deep sobs in my heart like a rose in tears;
 And your mortal nature quells the bitter pain,
 And in our true hearts the flower blooms again.
 I love you! remembrance is our flower of love!
 I love you! memory blooms from earth to heaven above!

And in our hearts, the melody of all the years
 Shall rob present and future of all bitter tears;
 Tears washing away the sweet sorrows of home,
 Leaving the broken-winged bird alone—alone!
 Alone! Ah, tender Prince, let all your future years
 Grow like a flower in my heart's flowing tears.

Sweet Prince! think of me in your palace home,
 Of one who lived broken-hearted and alone;
 Remember the cruel stings of remorse and grief,
 The imperial nature, that sorrows for relief.
 If your princely nature should melt in tears
 Your sweet poet comes to dispell all mortal fears.

Sweet Prince! friends are like the flowers of old,
 They come and go like Autumn's shower of gold;
 Some fallen leaves linger in our loving hearts,
 Leaves memory green when the summer departs.
 Love is our friendship and its memory sweet,
 Shall cleave in a living embrace of countless kisses sweet;
 I love you! I live in the heaven of your eyes!
 I love you! love is eternity and it never dies!

THE GIFTS OF TIME.

Giaour:

Oh, the mystic sweetness of melody,
 All eternal rapture in thy soul instill;
 The divinest throb of inspiration's thrill,
 Is to know and feel sweet immortality.
 The soul awakens like the seed of time,
 Earth blooms flowers of Paradise divine!

The soul awakens like the seed of time,
To reveal the mystery of life;
And amidst the turmoil and mystic strife,
Earth blooms flowers of Paradise divine!

Ahmed:

Truth gleams like a sword,
And evil will mow the nations down!
Oh, Heaven! 'tis like an angel's voice,
Uttering sweetest words of divinest fulfillment.
Giaour wraps the densest mind,
In a bloom of faith and ecstasy.

Giaour:

'Tis the pleasure of the hour, Prince Ahmed,
My heart yearns to sunder the dark gloom,
Chasing shadows o'er thy dark brow,
Betokening dull care as the slave of despair.
The magic song lingers on my lips
To still the sad musing of my heart;
Awakes the promise of sweet fulfillment,
The tenderness gleaming in sweet Fetnah's eyes.

Giondar:

Thy gentle words betoken some fulfillment,
Let me fulfill the hope thou speak'st of.

Giaour:

The Prince desires to wed sweet Fetnah,
Grows pale lest thou should'st refuse.

Giondar:

As Heaven hears, the voice of hope
Bids thee wed. A sumptuous feast
Make merry the realms of sweetest Persia.

Fetnah:

Sire, your gentle heart dispels
The one dread misgiving of my own:
As nature bids me give thee thanks
My heart o'erflows in silence.

Giondar:

The silence of thy heart is true knowledge,
And truth is love's best friend.

Ahmed:

Oh, glorious King! may Heaven revive
The blessings denied my father's throne:

Give thee the lasting joy of all fulfillment,
To bless thy life, thy every act!

Giondar:

Faith revives the friendship of other days,
Thrills my heart like the melody of a song;
Farewell, farewell! Ahmed—fair Princess—
Whilst we unloose the voice of silvery bells.

(Exit Ahmed, Fetnah.)

Giondar:

Who comes?

The clanking of dull chains
Sounds without.

Enter Marsavah, chained, and slaves.

Giaour:

'Tis Marsavah! and his darkling brow
Betokens the gloom of a broken pride.

Marsavah:

Little devil! the gloom of accursed failure,
The hatred of unavenged insolence.
If my fluttering hour could doom thy life
To utter reparation and captivity,
My anguished soul
Escape its bondage evermore!

Giaour:

You hate me, Marsavah, and I know
The hell of pain lurking in thy soul;
My deeds were honorable, and the price
Giaour paid for his father's throne.

Marsavah:

Oh, were I free to kill thee!
Smile like a menacing devil
To see thee die!

Giondar:

Slaves! unbound his shackles;
And if thou art a man,
Kill, oh devil, kill him!

Giaour:

Father! would'st see me die,
The victim of a bandit's revenge?
Rushing comet-like from hell,

To devour my very soul,
As decadent worlds are devoured,
Feeble and irresistent.

Marsavah (unbound, grasps scimitar) :

Thy word, proud King,
Whil'st devils defy the souls of men!
I dare revel in the beauty of thy soul,
Moulded like nature's divinest effort,
Reflecting all of beauty in one mortal face!
Laugh to see thy blood gush forth,
Though all Persia stood blasted 'fore my eyes!

Giaour:

Father! my pride revolts,
And I die trembling for thy very soul,
Yet refuse to meet thy merciless eye.
Oh, pity! 'twere the tender image of thyself,
Ever reflected in my heart so kind and true.
And now! you league with devils to destroy,
Poor, helpless Giaour.
Oh, brazen King, give me a weapon
To defend myself 'gainst this brooding vampire.
What—no? To die in cold blood,
As the pitless mower,
Cuts heedlessly the innocent, drooping flower.
As none but devils listen,
Defiance grasps my very soul—
Death! Death! Marsavah, kill me now!

He grasps Marsavah's weapon, and for a moment seeks to retain it. Giondar's face becomes illumined with admiration, and the expression turns to an awful terror as he gazes at Giaour.

Giondar (aside) :

Oh, Heaven! a crown of jewels
Shall henceforth deck his noble brow;
And this proud heart
Hold him as nature's most valiant force.

Marsavah (frees weapon) :

Hercules framed thy arm, boy.
Defense is an honor to thee,
Still I falter not.
Hate is the vulture of the human heart,
And hate kills thee!

Giaour:

Would'st see me die, Marsavah?

Marsavah:

Aye, as serpents kill
And poison all who thwart them.

Giaour:

I spared thy life, oh, gloomy devil—

(Struggles not to weep; then sobs aloud) :

E'en with my sword at thy throat,
Thou—slept—and—knew—it—not.
Oh, pity! that—I—may—go—forth— (recovers)
Grasp within my heart the throne of Persia,
Dethrone a King so vile as Giondar.

Marsavah:

A devil lurks in my heart, boy,
And devils spare not!
Were I to spare thy insolent life,
My very soul would drink despair!
I long to absolve, nay, to spare thee,
As thou art a dream of valor, and
Whil'st I kill thee, I kill the King.

Giaour (aside, and grasps him) :

Ah, then, fool the King,
And to his throne
Wild desolation bring!

Marsavah:

Fool the King! aye, thy wit
Is subtle as my divine blade (feels weapon).

Giaour:

Marsavah!

Pity is the flower of love,
Disloyalty, the worst infamy of manhood!
If I die the very force of nature
Shall stifle the hearts of wicked men;
Kill Giaour, destroy the flower of Kings,
And you kill all Persia.
Thus a nation merits the wrath of Heaven!
My father is no more, (sobs)
Then, Marsavah! I am Persia.
Thou art an infidel and a traitor!

Marsavah:

Kneel! Fate calls to thee!
(Giaour kneels).
Giondar! look with hellish woe,

As devils mock and gibe us here below!
Giaour dies,
An angel soul takes its flight to Heaven!
Oh, he is as valiant as a soldier of war,
And God repents to see him die!

He lifts the scimitar; Giaour loosens the silk and shows the *Flower of Persia*.

Giaour:

Strike!

Let fall the weapon,
Giaour dies,
Whil'st the *Flower of Persia*
Mocks thy infamy.

Marsavah:

'Tis a keen-edged blade—

Giaour:

Strike!

Devil! to prolong death's sting!

He clasps his hands; his head droops. Marsavah trembles, shudders convulsively, and wildly casts the weapon from him. He stoops, and with the divine expression of an immortal, lifts the boy in his arms.

Marsavah:

Oh, King! hell is not of earth.
My soul gasps to see him die!
Who comes thither? (wildly).
Marsavah shall kill all thy foes.
Honor gleans knowledge in thy defense!

Giondar:

Marsavah!

Honesty is wisdom's best flower,
A forgiving heart,
The dew of parched deserts!
(Places a crown of jewels on Giaour's head).
Marsavah! thou wert a noble soldier.
Nobility decked thy brow,
More precious than a crown.
I knew thy worth, poor Marsavah,
Suffered hell's torment to save thy honor,
And render thee a valiant soldier of the King:
Dropt honeyed dew on thy venom'd heart,
To change new rancor for old-time honesty.

Marsavah:

Who is like Giondar? Only Gods,
Who hold destiny in their very hands.

Giaour:

And I doubted thee,
Doubted the King of Persia!
Giaour is unworthy of thy love.

Giondar:

Marsavah's soul is worthy of a King's ransom,
And his honor is now inviolate.

Marsavah:

Angels rest the hour, and events
Direct our happy lives together.

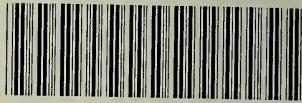
Giaour:

Gloomy devil! kiss my tears away,
'Tis the sweetest way old hatred to repay!

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